Foreword

This is the first volume in the series of three books on Charles Sanders Peirce's writings on Existential Graphs (EGs), the theory which he predicted to be "the Logic of the Future". These editions aim at being both inclusive and resourceful. I have attempted to maximise the amount of alternative versions, incomplete drafts and page fragments that one can gather from Peirce's enormous *Nachlass* of over 100 000 surviving pages, while minimising the reader's effort when following his spawning lines of thought and bursts of brilliant insights. The reader will, just as the editor has, despair over the writings that have frequent break-offs, discontinuities and aberrations; explorations left soberly unfinished and rhizomic, while well aware that so many of the now-lost pages and forgotten thoughts were once around to fill in the blanks. I hope to share with the reader the view that the numerous alternative versions, even when superficially repetitive, idiosyncratic or seemingly superseded by parallel or later attempts, are all too precious to be left out; too "gravid with young truth" to remain forever undisclosed from the eyes of posterity. If they won't appear in the present edition, chances are that much of that material would never find its way to print.

To wit, let us take to the heart the following passage as an example of such a variant:

> We have only to turn our attention for one moment to a relative term to see that the account given in the logic-books of the composition of concepts is entirely inadequate. The present writer showed the true mode of composition in the seventh volume of *The Monist* by means of graphs. But immediately after that publication he discovered another much better system of graphs, making the whole matter perfectly clear. But he has in vain endeavoured to persuade some journal, academy, or institution to print a sufficient account of it. The time will come when the world will be amazed at this; but then Newton's *Principia* would not have been printed yet if Edmund Halley had not been a very different sort of man from those upon whom publication depends in the United States at this day. (R 280, Alt. pp. 19–20, *The Basis of Pragmatism*, late 1904; LoF 3)[2]

The main purpose of the three volumes of the *Logic of the Future* is to facilitate advancement of inquiry on what has remained one of the most neglected topics in the study of Peirce's thought, the logic of graphs and their role in the eventual com-

2 The reference R is to the Charles Sanders Peirce papers deposited at Houghton Library, Harvard University, as listed and catalogued by Richard S. Robin. See "Abbreviations for Peirce's Works and Archives" at the end of the General Introduction for the standard references to the archives, collections and editions of Peirce's work. When the material appears in the present three-part edition of the *Logic of the Future* (LoF for short), a reference to Volumes 1–3 is given.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110651409-204

pletion of his mature logic and philosophy. This oversight shows up in previous editions of his works, which occasionally but quite routinely have left the graphical account out of the picture. Technical limitations are understandable, but the inevitable consequence has been that his favourite method of analysis became unduly suppressed from the perspectives one hopes to gain over the maturation of his later thought, leading to a de-emphasis of the manifold contributions Peirce calculated logical graphs to make towards erecting a fully articulated, architectonic scientific philosophy.

These three volumes on Peirce's logic of graphs should be viewed only as the beginnings of a renewed exposition of the kind of inquiry that a comprehensive access to the largely unpublished late works of this poly-pragmatic American philosopher would facilitate. They do little more than identify the relevant minimal corpus that is not to be neglected in the scholarship on Peirce's method of logical analysis, its history, and its applications to the workings of intellectual cognition. Further editions are needed on Peirce's late writings on the algebra of logic, logic of abduction (retroduction), inductive logic and the logic of science, non-Aristotelian (and non-classical) logics, reasoning, definitions, history of logic, semiotics, methodeutic, modality, continuity, vagueness, imagination and perception; the list goes on with anything that was represented in non-graphical notations (such as Peirce's 1909 work on triadic logics), in order to complete the identification of that minimal logical corpus. Any of these areas, when fully available, will open up new insights on, as well as call for some major revisions to, our current understanding of the logical, philosophical and scientific achievements of this agile mind, and what their proper place in the history of logic will end up being. And although electronic repositories of one's literary remains are certainly useful, and although those, too, will appear before long, they are no substitute for organised, systematic and thematic records of one's profound thoughts.

There are also wider issues that have to do with the kinds of historiographies one gets to write on the development of modern logic, including the virtual histories of what the logic of the later centuries would have looked like had the findings that Peirce produced and presented in various occasions been better and more timely disseminated. Misfortunes happened during Peirce's life all too often—yet on balance, we are also fortunate and privileged as much of his literary estate has been preserved for us to continue its future appreciation and critical scrutiny, however fragmentary or prefatory those surviving segments may appear to be. I hope that the present edition will play its part towards achieving these wider goals.

Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen